

*The Union of Myanmar***SURVEY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
IN THE UNION OF MYANMAR****COUNTRY
PROFILE**

The Union of Myanmar is a country in Southeast Asian bordered by the Peoples' Republic of China, Laos, Thailand, Bangladesh and India. With a total area of 676,577 square kilometres, it has the contiguous frontier of 6157 kilometers and the coastline from the mouth of the Naaf River to Kawthaung of 2229 kilometers. More than half of the land is mountainous, mostly covered with forests. The country is made up of seven states and seven divisions. The capital is *Yangon*.

*Economy,
Population and
Demography:*

A socialist economy. The population, estimated to be 40.03 million (1989-90) with an annual growth rate of 1.88 % decreasing from 2.02 % in 1973-83, comprises many nationalities and 135 recognized ethnic groups. The largest nationality is formed by the *Bamas* (68%) living mainly in the lowlands, the rest are *Chins*, *Kachins*, *Kayahs*, *Kayins*, *Mons*, *Rakhines* and *Shans*. The majority of people are Buddhists (85 %), while the rest are Christians, Muslims, Hindus or Animists. The literacy rate is 79 % for the population aged 15-65 years and 63 % for the population aged 65 years and above. The GNP (1988/89) was US\$10,071 million with the labour force in agriculture, services/trade, and industries.

*Language of
Instruction:*

English and Myanmar. English was used as medium of instruction prior to 1947. After 1948, educational policy regarding the language of instruction changed twice: (1) By the 1947 constitution, the Myanmar language was declared the national language and medium of instruction but it was not until 1965 that the change was finally achieved when all the schools were nationalized. Also with the enactment of University Law of 1964, the medium of instruction at the university level became Myanmar; (2) Since 1981 when English language proficiency was again considered as an objective of education and to give it greater usage as a medium of instruction. English began to be used for the teaching of subjects (mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology) for the science stream and for economics at the high school level. Also, starting from the academic year 1986/87, English was taught from kindergarten upwards (instead of from the fifth standard). English is also used for the correspondence courses offered by the arts and science universities and their affiliated colleges and also the Institute of Education.

*Educational
System:*

Education in Myanmar enjoys a favourable environment as the people have traditionally given education the highest priority in their lives since the time of King Anawratha (1044- 1077) when Theravada Buddhism became the dominant religion of a unified country. Traditionally, young boys (of Buddhist faith) before the age of twenty enter a monastery as a novice for a period of time during which they are provided with basic functional literacy and numeracy and are introduced to religious teachings through Buddhist scriptures. Girls, when young, also go to monasteries to acquire basic functional literacy and numeracy. Monastic education become less prominent under British rule from 1886-1948. Though the western type of formal education has been adapted and adopted in Myanmar (as in other parts of the world) and monastic schools are no longer part of the formal education system, a type of informal monastic education is still practiced today in urban areas and more so in rural areas. Because of this, people are, by and large, religious and have great respect for education and the culture inherently serves as a very positive foundation for it. Also, as a result of both the monastic tradition and the social welfare emphasis given by post-independence governments, learning and literacy have long been prestigious attributes in Myanmar.

The educational system comprises a five-year Primary school (Kindergarten to Grade 4), 4-year Middle school (Grades 5-8), two-year High school (Grades 9-10), and certificate/degree granting higher education institutions. There are 31,429 primary schools with 11,913 teachers and 5.20 million students; 1,696 middle schools with 47,666 teachers and 1.23 million students; and 722 high schools with 12,754 teachers and 290,862 students. For teacher education, there are 19 institutions (one Institution of Education, four Teacher Training Colleges, and 14 Teacher Training Schools) with 555 instructors and 4,53 students. There 26 institutions of higher learning (six professional institutes, three universities, six degree-granting colleges (4-year), and 11 certificate granting colleges (2-year) with 5,395 academic staffs and 126,900 students. For technical, agricultural and vocational education, there are 64 institutions (10 Government Technical Institutes, seven State Agricultural Institutes, 13 Technical High Schools, nine Agricultural High Schools, three Commercial Schools, six Schools of Home Science, seven Handicraft Schools, seven Machine Repair and Maintenance Schools, and two Fisher Schools) with 2,595 instructors and 11,619 students.

*Communication
Infra-structure:*

All parts of Myanmar are easily accessible, except during the monsoon period from mid-May to mid-October. In 1985, there were 1,126 post offices, 55,936 telephone, 336 telegraph, and 160 telex units. Radio and television broadcasts are also available.

OVERVIEW OF DISTANCE EDUCATION:

Distance education was considered by the Ministry of Education as a viable and economical means of broadening opportunities for a university education--not as a "second chance" for those who cannot follow the normal progression but as an alternative mode to the regular on-campus courses. ("Second chance" courses were already in existence in the form of the External Arts programme conducted by the University of Yangon in the 1960s and phased out in the 1970s; the Workers' College which is affiliated with the University of Yangon and "evening classes" at the University of Mandalay have over the years tried to meet the continuing education needs of those who have left the normal progression stream to work). Presently, three distance education programmes are offered: (1) The Institute of Education's Teacher Education programmes started in 1973/74, and (2) The Department of Higher Education's University Correspondence Course started in 1976, and (2) Primary School Teacher Courses by State Teacher Training Institutions and the Department of Basic Education started in 1978. In 1973/74, a two-year Diploma course in Education by correspondence was offered by the Institute of Education, Yangon, to meet the certification needs of teachers; but it was terminated in 1981/82 and the 2-year Bachelor of Education course was initiated.

The University Correspondence Course was first established in 1976 to provide greater access to ensure equity and to bring about continuous education under the supervision of the Rector of the Arts and Science University, Rangoon (Yangon) and existed as a centralized quasi-government establishment. The centre in Yangon served the distance education needs of the whole country. In 1981, the correspondence course was placed under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and became a regular governmental establishment. The day-to-day management of university education is, to a certain extent, decentralized with the responsibilities being shared by the three universities and their affiliated colleges: (1) **University of Yangon** (Patheingyi Degree College, Sittoung Degree College, Workers' College, Hinthada College, and Pyigyidagon College; (2) **University of Mandalay** (Magway Degree College, Myittha Degree College, Taunggyi Degree College, Lashio College, Monywa College, Meiktila College, Shwebo College, Pakokku College, and Yenangyaung College; and (3) **University of Mawlamyine** (Bago College, Dawei College, and Hpa-an College). The prerequisite for admission to the university correspondence courses of the universities and their affiliated colleges is similar to those required of a student joining the on-campus courses. The correspondence courses offered are for the four areas: (1) Arts, (2) Science, (3) Economics, and (4) Law. The duration for all the courses is five years with the exception of the law course which is for six years.

In 1978, "Distance-Learning-Through-Correspondence course" for non-certificated primary school teachers was established. The

number of primary school teachers accepted was approximately 1000. Since then the number has risen to 2000. The responsibility for this course lies with State Teacher Training Institutions and the Department of Basic Education. The teacher education courses have proved attractive and more effective than the university correspondence courses because the former are integrated with career advancement.

*Factors Leading
to Establishment
of Distance
Education
Programmes:*

(1) Needs to provide greater access and equity to higher (or university) education with the enactment of the University Education Law of 1964; (2) Needs of increasing number of students seeking university education in arts and science universities and their affiliated colleges, and (3) Needs to upgrade non-certified school teachers to meet the increasing numbers of primary and secondary schools and students.

*Year of
Establishment:*

Since 1973 with the establishment of the "Diploma in Education Course by Correspondence" by the Institute of Education.

*Media
for Distance
Education:*

A multi-media package comprises (1) Printed materials for correspondence study; (2) Radio broadcasts; and (3) Compulsory "on-campus" attendance during weekends (for science and economics students) or short-term intensive teaching (for arts and law students). With the expansion and improvement of the national network, the use of both television and radio programmes will be increased as components of distance education multi-media packages.

*Sources of
Financial
Supports:*

From the Government. The University Correspondence Course and funded by the Department of Higher Education, The B.Ed Course by the Institute of Education, and the Primary school teachers' "Distance Learning Through Correspondence Course" by the State Teacher Training Institutions and Department of Basic Education. The annual fees collected from the students are treated as Government revenue. For the University Correspondence Course, the fees are US\$55.0 for Arts students and US\$60.0 for Science students. Since the academic staff of the universities and colleges undertake the teaching functions, no extra expenditure is incurred for their salaries.

Aims:

To provide higher education on a more equitable basis throughout the Union and in the area of education to provide training and certification opportunities for primary teachers and high school teachers. It also aims at providing an opportunity for those who are already employed to continue their education without having to leave their jobs. The rationale for distance education is that it is low-cost as compared to regular, on-campus education and that it ensures a better educated work force which will in turn contribute to national development.

*Trends of
Development in
Distance Education:*

Since its establishment, university distance education has remained static and, more or less, stagnant. Growth has taken place in the teacher education courses by correspondence. This growth, however, has been quantitative rather than qualitative. Trends of development of distance education are in the areas of technology (vocational and professional), management, administration, business, banking, entrepreneurship, commerce and international trade in order to upgrade manpower for the country's economic and social development.

Legal Status:

Fully supported by laws and regulations under the Ministry of Education's Department of Higher Education, Department of Basic Education, and the State Teacher Training Institutions.

*Control and
Management:*

The management of the education system (including distance education as part of higher education) is top down, in line with overall government management. The distance education system of Myanmar comprises three main components: (1) **Planning and Management** (approving courses; sanctioning finances; Higher Education budget allocations and adjustments; and providing leadership and supervision) by Ministry of Education's Department of Higher Education under *the Universities Central Council* and *the Council of University Academic Bodies*. Both Councils have control over the University Correspondence courses of the DHE and the B.Ed. Correspondence Course of the Institute of Education as part of higher education is administered by the Department of Higher Education; (2) **Administrative and Academic** by Correspondence Department in individual universities or colleges. The Rector and the Principals are the nominal heads of the Correspondence Departments assisted by heads of administrative and academic sections, depending upon the size of the student population; and (3) **Teaching-learning process** by individual programmes for delivery and evaluation systems.

*Instructional
System:*

After registration, students receive distance learning packages and start their studies from learning materials. The learning materials are based on books prescribed for the on-campus courses of Yangon. After studying from printed materials, the students carry the assignments prepared by the staff of the various departments of the University of Yangon, the University of Mandalay, and the Institute of Economics in Yangon for the B.A (Econ.) courses. Following the initial package of books, the students receive a total of 16 assignments, one assignment every fortnight, complete and return them at the same rate. The completed assignments are marked by the academic staff of the universities and colleges and returned to the students. In practice, however, this time frame is almost never adhered to. There are frequent complaints from students in remote areas about the irregular delivery and loss of the assignments.

<i>Geographical coverage:</i>	Nation-wide coverage through higher educational institutions in the seven states and divisions.
<i>Research Activities:</i>	A few research activities on distance education have been carried out. However, an on-going study is being conducted by UNDP/UNESCO Education Sector Study (Project No. MYA/90/004).
<i>Enrollment and Graduates in Distance Education Programmes:</i>	In the academic year 1986/87, the total (nation-wide) enrollment was highest at 105,587 and declined in the academic years 1987/88 and 1991/92.
<i>International Affiliation and Cooperation:</i>	ICDE, UNDP, and UNESCO.
<i>Problems and Constraints:</i>	(1) Inadequacy of the postal system to handle the high volume of correspondence; (2) Lack of multi-media inputs; (3) Physical facilities are inadequate for storage and dispatch of instructional materials; (4) Insufficient printing facilities to cope with the high quality of printed materials; (5) Declining standards resulting from the use of learning materials not specifically designed for distance education; (6) Shortage of printing paper; (7) Unavailability of micro-computers for record keeping and retrieval information; (8) Absence of a management information system to provide fast and accurate information needed for decision making; (9) Lack of evaluation and regular feedback needed for maintaining standards and initiating growth and improvement; (10) Failure to provide sufficient staff development; and (11) Imposing a 'double load' on academic staff without any incentives.

**LIST OF
DISTANCE
EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS:**

1. Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education
2. Institute of Education*
3. State Teacher Training Institutions and Department of Basic and Education.*

*Survey data not available.

UNIVERSITY CORRESPONDENCE DEPARTMENT
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

**INSTITUTIONAL
DATA**

*Year of
Establishment:* 1976.

Name of Head: **Mr. U Win Maung**
Position: *Director-General*
Address: Department of Higher Education
Thaton Road, University Post Office
Yangon, UNION OF MYANMAR.
Telephone: (01)3159.

Nature of institution: Conventional institution with distance teaching departments.

**Educational levels
provided for
DE programmes:** First Degree
Postgraduate (Second degree).

Titles and levels of DE programmes:	<i>Title</i>	<i>Level</i>
	1. Bachelor of Arts	Undergraduate
	2. Bachelor of Arts (Economics)	Undergraduate
	3. Bachelor of Science	Undergraduate
	4. Bachelor of Law	Undergraduate
	5. Bachelor of Education	Postgraduate/ Second degree.

Governance: A national institution.

Objectives: 1. National development
2. Expansion of educational opportunity
3. Equality of educational opportunity
4. Cost-effectiveness
5. Teacher Education and Training.

**Sources of financial
support of DE
programmes:** *Tuition Fees:*
1. From Government funding
2. The student pays all tuition expenses by himself/herself in
the amount of US\$90.0 per year.

Budget: Part of Higher Education budget allocated to individual universities.

Trends of development of DE resources and activities:	<p><i>Expanded:</i> None.</p> <p><i>Decreased:</i></p> <p>Telecommunication equipment</p> <p>Study materials and textbooks</p> <p>Broadcasting programmes</p> <p>Audio-Visual Aids</p> <p>Face-to-face sessions.</p> <p><i>Stable:</i></p> <p>Financial provision</p> <p>Distance education programmes</p> <p>The teaching force</p> <p>Variety of courses offered.</p> <p><i>Not applicable:</i></p> <p>Local study centres</p> <p>Library resources.</p>
Trends of enrollment in DE Programmes:	Declining.
Number of current DE students:	78,908 students.
Number of annual intake of DE students:	Same as the above.
Number of students currently enrolled in each DE level:	Data not available.
Number of annual DE graduates:	Data not available.
Accumulative number of DE graduates:	Data not available.
Components of personnel in DE:	Faculty members share their work duties between non-distance education institutions and distance education ones.
Number of full-time staff:	Data not available.
Number of part-time staff:	Data not available.
Number of Courses and programmes:	Data not available.

Production of teaching materials/media:	Teaching materials and media are produced by faculty members, similar to on-campus courses.
Regional/Study Centres:	Not applicable.
Overall student Profile:	
<i>Age distribution:</i>	Data not available.
<i>Gender distribution:</i>	data not available.
<i>Income Level:</i>	Data not available.
<i>Geographical distribution:</i>	Data not available.
Occupational and Ethnic Composition of DE Students:	<p><i>Ethnic Composition:</i> Bamas 68.0% Minorities 32% (Chins, Kachins, Kayahs, Kayins, Mons, Rakhines and Shans). <i>Occupational distribution:</i> Data not available.</p>
Future development:	Infra-structure for distance education.
Major obstacles for implementing distance education:	(1) Lack of infra-structure for distance education; (2) Inadequacy of postal services; (3) Inappropriate curriculum; and (4) Insufficient printing facilities.
Affiliation with regional and international DE organizations:	None.
PROGRAMMES OF INSTRUCTION, MEDIA, METHODS, & EVALUATION:	<p>List of Programmes: 1. Bachelor's degree.</p>

PROGRAMME I: BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMME

Level:	Undergraduate.
Courses of instruction:	<i>Humanities:</i> History: National/World History Philosophy Psychology. <i>Languages and literature:</i> Languages: Myanmar. Literature: National. <i>Physical Science:</i> Chemistry Physics. <i>Biological Science and Technology:</i> General Biology and life sciences. <i>Mathematics:</i> Mathematical sciences. <i>Law.</i> <i>Social Sciences:</i> Economics Geography.
Length of course:	Five academic years for all programmes.
Media and methods:	<i>Most dominant:</i> Printed correspondence texts Tutoring via mail. <i>Dominant:</i> Face-to-face tutoring Weekend schools (Science). <i>Least dominant:</i> Television Audio-cassettes Audio-vision Radio.
Language of instruction:	English and Myanmar.
Admission requirements:	Before entering the distance education program, the student must have completed basic education and High school.

Number of students: 78,908.

Annual intake of DE students: Data not available.

Evaluation:
Continuous assessment: Written assignments for submission.

Final assessment: Written final examinations.

Educational and employment arrangements for graduates: The same as for "on-campus" graduates.

Profile of students in this level: *By Educational Background:* Data not available.

By Employment: Data not available.

By types of career: Data not available.

<i>By gender:</i>	(%)
Male:	48.0
Female:	52.0
<u>Total:</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Acceptance of certificate, diploma, and degree: Accepted as equal to a comparable award given by other non-distance education institutions.